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UNIVERSAL RELIGION

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RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA.

By Charles Strong, D. D.

Minister of "The Australian Church," Melbourne.

I cannot say that Religion, in the best sense of the word, flourishes in Australia. A very large proportion of our people have no church connection and do not attend any place of worship, and we have almost nothing worthy to be called a religious literature. The reasons I take to be the division and squabbles of churches and church-courts, the lack of united religious organization, and perhaps the fact that religion and religious teaching do not keep pace with the advance of knowledge and education. I attribute it also to the fact that our rival divisions, and the dependence of the teachers of religion on their small congregations for a living, prevent ministers from being leaders of their flocks, and discourages anything like originality and freedom.

Apart from this, however, the atmosphere of Australia does not seem favorable to a spiritual mind and to that for which churches are supposed to stand. We are a dress-loving, pleasure and sport-loving, sensation-loving, and money-loving people. We have some of the salt of the earth among us, sober, devout and intelligent people, but the atmosphere is very much as I have described it. There is a very wide-spread gambling spirit, and I fear a considerable amount of drinking and drunkenness, together with a leaven of commercial morality, which blunts the

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conscience, and indisposes to the spirit of religious thought and ideals. The spiritual temperature in short is low.

For some years we have been passing through a commercial crisis. A mad period of land-booming, silver-booming, etc., was followed by terrible depression, intensified by long-continued drought. Wealthy families have been brought to poverty, and supporters of churches are sometimes now unable to pay railway fares to church, or to continue their subscriptions. Hundreds are out of employment, and during the lamentable South African war many young men were glad to take five shillings a day, and leave their own country to kill and pillage the Boers.

Politics engross the thought and energy of the more active minded. We are divided into Freetraders, Protectionists and Labour Parties. Socialistic ideals have taken root and as the ministers and churches in too large measure stand aloof from the aspirations of Labour, and do not interest themselves in the promotion of that new social environment without which I believe the program of Liberal Religion cannot be carried out, of course Labour does not feel drawn to the churches. We have small societies such as Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Spiritualists, which of course draw off people from the traditional churches and we have entertainments on Sunday evenings, such as parties in private homes, and concerts in public halls, which tend to thin the churches.

You must not think, however, we have no religious activity at all. We have endless charitable institutions, Parents' Unions, Children's Aid Societies, etc., and in such practical religious work people of different religious opinions unite. We have also a sprinkling of readers and thinkers, some of whom are "waiting for the kingdom of God."

We have a large number of Roman Catholics and they work together as one man. In Victoria the great struggle is over religious education in state schools. Many Protestants are opposed to any formal and systematic recognition of religion, and the Romans are equally opposed to it because any such recognition would savour of protestantism. The Roman Catholics want their church school recognized, and will have nothing but Roman dogma taught by their own teachers.

As regards the Australian Church you know its origin and ideal. We are striving to be a comprehensive religious brotherhood, and we have no formal creed. Our Bond of Union is our spirit, our attitude of trust and reverence, and our practical aim—the promotion of a Divine Humanity.

We have some very earnest and devout supporters and the church has done good work, I believe, during its 18 years of exist-

ence, not only in practical beneficence, but in helping to clarify the religious atmosphere and to promote the cause of a freer and healthier religious life. We call ourselves "Catholic and Free." Our worship is simple, but we try to make it warm and edifying. We have an optional and partial liturgy, and this, with our hymns, helps to bind us together—in one religious atmosphere. We have adjuncts such as Sunday morning classes, a Social Improvement and Friendly Help Society, a Young People's Guild, a Religious Science Club for study and friendly discussion of religious questions, a Ladies' Reading Club, a Psychical Research Society, etc. We have also a Library, and use the printing press for disseminating truth as we see it. The Australian Herald which has a considerable circulation, has been carried on by us for many years, and goes to other states, and other countries, as well as among our own people.

But our people are much poorer than they were. We are hampered with heavy debt, and wealthy people fight shy of a church which tries to preach the ethics of Jesus, and has sympathy with the masses.

We are isolated to some extent, and our religious attitude, I need not say, is regarded with suspicion and dislike especially by those who do not take the trouble to understand us. Other churches, moreover, are now moving towards views that some years ago were thought very terrible, so that the need of such a church is not felt as it once was perhaps. I wish you would send along an Apostle of the Larger Faith to stir Melbourne and Sydney up. We want religion. The harvest may be plenteous, but the laborers are few. The great weakness of liberal churches is their isolation and the fact that they do not keep up correspondence, and encourage each other. The ministers, too, have too great a burden laid on them sometimes, and their voice grows monotonous after years of service.

The Seattle congregation should send their minister on a missionary tour to Melbourne, where the pulpit of the Australian Church will be open to him and to his message.

IDEAL BEAUTY.

James H. West.

Ideal Beauty!—seers' exhaustless theme
Which hath absorbed their eager spirits quite!
Not beauties merely,—of the lustrous night
And iridescent day; but loftier dream, —
Beauty embracing beauties. Fair the gleam
Of earliest dawn; a purifying sight
The heavens all diamonded: but more that Light,—
The heavens' heaven,—of worlds and souls the Beam.

O radiant hill-tops! unto you mine eyes!
O budding violets! all my sense ye thrall!
O human comrades! heart o' me ye thrill!
But Beauty uncreate in earth or skies,
Eternal and divine,—soul's ceaseless call,—
To thee my prayer, my passion, and my will!

For "Universal Religion."

HOW TO LIVE IF WE ARE IMMORTAL.

BY ALFRED W. MARTIN.

Such thought and study as I have been able to give the subject has led me to the conclusion that after the brief spell of unconsciousness we call death, we wake into consciousness and continue from the point we left off. The old idea that at the moment of death, or on the resurrection morning, we went either directly to hell to be as miserable as possible forever, or directly to heaven to be as happy as possible forever, is utterly absurd. Suppose I were to die now or in ten minutes, I would not be suddenly transformed into an angel or into a demon; I would remain just what I am. There is nothing in the mere fact of death that would change my nature in the least. I would simply go on evolving my character according to the laws of growth.

Believing, then, that I am an immortal being, I plan my life accordingly; that is to say, I give special attention to all that has permanent value and the least possible and practicable to that which has only temporary value. For, if we are immortal beings, it becomes a matter of mighty importance that we shape our lives accordingly, that we live here and now like immortal and not like temporary beings, that we

train ourselves in all those interests that have permanent worth, cultivating especially those faculties and powers that will be of permanent service to us.

It was just this thought that the New Testament writer of the epistle to the Ephesians had in mind when he wrote, "every one that hath this hope (of immortality) will purify himself." In this sentence I see an epitome of our highest duty as immortal beings. The word "purify" sums it all up. Let me then develop or unfold this thought, let me state some of the ways in which every one who cherishes this immortal hope may purify himself, some of the ways in which life here is intimately related to and governed by the belief in life hereafter.

1. First of all, then, if we are immortal beings we will give special heed in our daily business or work to the difference between the things of time and the things of eternity. Among the former are pleasure, wealth, fame, social position and power; things that perish with the using. To the latter belong knowledge, wisdom, love, strength of will; things that increase with use. Whatever his occupation or station in life, an immortal being will seek to cultivate these things of eternity, because for all of these he will have use wherever he may be and whatever he may do. This, then, will be his sovereign aim, to develop the imperishable portion of his personality.

2. If the circumstances of his lot are hard, if he finds himself handicapped by trying, harrassing conditions in the struggle of life, he will remember that it is not the circumstances, not the conditions, but **how** he takes them and **what** he makes of them that counts. Will they be hindrances or helps, stumbling blocks or stepping-stones to higher things? this is the paramount question. If he be poor he will remember that the man is more than the means of livelihood, that the best things of life are not the monopoly of the rich and favored class; above all, he will remember that the successful life is the life true to its own highest ideals. He will realize, moreover, that this world is only a primary school and that the important thing is not a cushioned seat in the school house, nor a morocco-bound text book, nor a costly school suit, but to get his lessons well and be ready to graduate.

3. If any of his projects or plans fail of completion he will not grow sullen or morose or pessimistic, because he knows he has put intelligence and conscience and consecration into his work; he has used his immortal powers, and so he

can put the responsibility for success on his Maker. And this, indeed, is the key to a successful life, so to live, so to use these higher powers that the responsibility for a successful issue is shifted from oneself to God. An immortal being, then, will face failure, when it comes, with equanimity, conscious that by the eternal standard, "success is naught, endeavor's all," that ' "tis better to have failed in the high aim, than vulgarly to have succeeded in the low." If he lose money or social position or any other material advantage, he knows he has not lost what is worth more than all these, the conviction that he has earnestly striven to live up to the highest of which he is capable. Hence at the core of his being there ever abides a calm, a serenity, a deep peace of inestimable practical value in the conduct of his daily life. Every form of adversity that crosses his path will provoke fresh effort and through the effort he will grow. Even though no one else be helped by his effort, the man himself will be developed, and, after all, about the best contribution a man can make to civilization is to contribute one more clean, honest, upright, incorruptible life to those already in the world. See how far-reaching the significance of an immortal's life is. Think what would happen if every one lived like an immortal soul, lived a life of intelligence, conscience, love, a life that succeeds wherein it seems to fail! It would mean nothing less than the actual redemption of mankind from nine-tenths of the ills that afflict the race, because the root of all the evils of our social organism lies not in the external conditions, but in the character of those who live under them.

4. Again, every one who holds the immortal hope will purify himself still further by seeking to give good rather than to get good, and since we can give of spiritual good only what we have, our aim as immortal souls will be to develop our higher powers so that we may become more and more radiating centers of intelligence and wisdom, of service and of love.

5. I come now to a mode of self-purification which an immortal soul will value as of great account, I mean the reserving of moments in each day or week for self-examination, self-collecting, because in the hurry and worry of our modern strenuous life, with its passion for wealth and worldly interests, the reservation of such quiet moments is a practice of paramount importance. An immortal soul needs to see, from time to time, how it stands with himself and the sacred facts of truth and right; he needs to see whether he is gaining or

perchance losing in the inward life; he needs to make sure that the sovereign aim of his life is still and steadily supreme and actually dominating all he does. Then, as his innermost experience of all, one of which perhaps he will not feel like speaking to others because of its interiorness and sanctity, he will engage betimes in silent communing, calling to mind the great fact that there exists a Power at the heart of things making for truth and right and love, and that man has no higher mission that to co-operate with this Power and by thus putting his finite purpose in tune with the Infinite Purpose the man gets strength, hope, courage, inspiration. In such spiritual exercise there is nothing irrational, or sentimental, or antiquated, but a genuine, practical, beneficent influence is exerted upon every aspect of one's life. Such silent communing, or prayer, if you prefer the word, is the hush in which conscience steeps itself in the Eternal Right and human wills nerve themselves by contact with the Eternal Will; it is the outflashing of the inner light upon the outer life, the spiritual act of calling up the supreme qualities of character, conscious that they are not fully ours and that thus to dwell on them strengthens, consoles, purifies, inspires.

6. It remains only to speak of one other way in which every one who holds the immortal hope will purify himself. It is by making the memory of dear ones who have departed this life an inspiration; never saying or doing anything that could not bear the light of those dear eyes that were closed in death. Too often, alas, does it happen that people who regard themselves as immortal souls act in this matter as though they were only temporary beings. Take, for example, the common case of the woman who has lost some one very near and very dear to her. The world is at once cold, cheerless and poor, and her own life empty, desolate and forlorn beyond words to describe it. Who does not sympathize with such an one and feel that every ache and pang of her heart is natural, justified, inevitable? But beneath the crushing weight of her bereavement she gives herself up to nursing her grief and brooding over her loss. Can such a course be justified? Has an immortal soul any right to sit down and nurse grief or brood over bereavement? Grieve she certainly will; she must grieve. It would be a shocking lack in her nature not to grieve; but to let her grief take out all the strength and sweet usefulness from her life is utterly wrong and unwarranted. Why? Because the sovereign aim of an immortal soul is to make the fullest possible use of all the higher powers, those that would

be brought into play when the earthly life has ended. To brood over sorrow or nurse one's grief means to deplete one's forces, to undermine one's permanent powers and sap them of their strength. It means loss of poise, paralysis of will-power, and life here in the light of life hereafter forbids any such unethical results as these. "Ah, but my sorrow is unparalleled, my loss unequalled," you may say. Yet even granting this contention of yours it cannot relieve you of the obligation incumbent on an immortal soul to see to it that its own noblest powers are not impaired by any experience whatsoever. To be sure, no sorrow or loss has ever yet been recorded as saddest and deepest but a sadder and deeper sooner or later came to light. But be the sorrow and the loss what they may, never can they exonerate an immortal soul from the duty of keeping the power to think, the power to love, the power to help in the best condition possible. As an illustration of the particular point I am trying to make, take the experience of Fanny Kemble, the English actress, who lost her devoted husband and soon after his death wrote an exquisite poem the burden of which is the inspiration afforded by the memory of the beloved dead:

"What shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace?

"I'll tell thee: For thy sake, I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told,
While thou, beloved, art far from me.

"For thee, I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains;
For thy dear sake, I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes pains.

"I will this weary blank of absence make
A noble task time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have won since yet I live.

"So may this darksome time build up in me
A thousand graces which shall thus be thine;
So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine."

So, too, it was with Lucy Smith in that wonderful story of her life with William. How unspeakable was the loss she sustained when death removed her husband from her side—What should she do with all the days and weeks till she should see his face? Brood over her loss, indulge in the satisfaction of a grief that would be selfish? Nay, but lay firm hold on all nobler things, strive to prove herself more worthy of his love, keep on growing here as she felt he was growing there; in a word, she would transfigure her sorrow by making it minister to soul-development.

So, again, it was with Tennyson when death claimed Arthur Hallam, the friend he "held as half divine." In the immortal elegy and eulogy, if so we may speak of "In Memoriam," Tennyson tells us that at first sorrow was a "cruel fellowship," cutting him off from all association and intercourse, shutting him out from participation in public affairs. But gradually the "sorrow deepened down" and as it did so the poet felt himself growing "kindlier to his kind," the blessed memory of his friend lifting his thought to a new perception of duty and quickening his will to sympathy and service. In these historical examples of transfigured sorrow we see how memories can be made inspirations and friendship perform the very highest of all helpful offices for the bereaved.

Concerning the hypothesis on which this discourse is based, let me, in conclusion, express once more the personal conviction which only deepens with time and thought. It is that as we all came out of the Universal Life, so back to the Universal Life must we all go; not, however, by the extinction of our individual being, but by the completion of it. Out from the Heart of Nature we came with all the elements of our being, back to that Heart of Nature we must go with all our matured experience, with all our developed spiritual life, fitted by the discipline of life's struggles and temptations to inherit the eternity of God.

PROFESSOR LEUBA'S CRITICISMS OF PROFESSOR JAMES.*

By John W. Roberts.

Professor Leuba holds that Professor James' worst sin is that he has refused to extend to religious phenomena a principle of explanation "already consecrated by the reclaiming of extensive portions of life hitherto surrendered by science to devils and angels." It is to be deeply regretted that the critic did not give

*Continued from the December number.

some distinct name to this principle thus offended against and consistently adhere to it throughout his article. He seems to name it 'the unconscious', 'the subconscious', 'the subliminal,' the trans-marginal', 'the subjective,' and 'the naturalistic', indiscriminately. And he confesses to being sorely disappointed in finding that Professor James does not regard the subconscious as a principle of explanation at all but only "a temporary noun of designation for a group of facts" whose only common characteristic is that they lie outside of the ordinary waking consciousness. Rationalism would be the best name perhaps. At least this is the one used by the author and defined by him thus: "Rationalism insists that all our beliefs ought ultimately to find for themselves articulate grounds. Such grounds, for rationalism must consist of four things: (1) definitely statable abstract principles; (2) definite facts of sensation; (3) definite hypotheses based on such facts; and (4) definite inferences logically drawn." This, then, is the principle which Professor James refuses to extend to all the phenomena of religious experience an act explicable to the critic only on the ground that he has become the partizan of a metaphysical creed. Professor James himself, however, has another explanation. He claims that the rationalistic principle can not be extended to all these phenomena because there are among them facts of experience for which rationalism fails to account. This brings us to the last and the main contention of the critic that, despite his claim, Professor James has failed to produce any empirical evidence for the existence of extra-human personalities.

As this point of dispute reduces itself to the question whether there are any facts of experience which can not be explained by the rationalistic principle let us see what, according to Professor James, these facts are. In general they are the experiences of the mystical consciousness. And the records of these experiences show "that, though the five senses be in abeyance in them, they are face to face presentations of what seems immediately to exist." The mystics directly perceive objective realities of the spiritual order. They have the 'sense of presence' of something standing outside themselves to which various names are given. Some call it 'God', others 'a stream of tendency', others still the 'ideal', Professor James calls it the 'more'. But by whatever name it is known it is something objective in the same sense as the contents of our five senses are objective. In the same region with these mystical experiences originate also our "ideal impulses, for we find these impulses possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account." And our intuitions, if we have any, come from a deeper level

of our nature "than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits." These, briefly, are the facts which, according to Professor James "can not be explained on the rationalistic hypothesis and do not fall within the resources of the personal subject." In seeking to undermine the reality and authority of these mystical states the critic claims that for rationalism to yield its authority over these mystical states would be to make every form of consciousness a law unto itself and thus turn our life over to the rule of irrationality and insanity. Such a dreadful result could come to pass, however, only on the assumption that the rational consciousness was the sole and supreme authority. But in the empirical philosophy it is the critical and not the rational consciousness which is supreme. For the empiricist the rational consciousness is only one form of consciousness along side of which there may exist other forms such as the mystical. And while each form has a voice in determining what we shall believe no one form has the whole say in the matter. And if a clash arises between the various claims it is to the critical and not to the rational consciousness that the appeal must be made. He who takes it for granted that the testimony of only one form of consciousness, the rationalistic, is to be relied upon forfeits thereby his right to be a critic and judge. It is the failure to grasp this fundamental principle of the empirical philosophy which has led our critic to say that the rational consciousness must be supreme because it is rational, and that Professor James' position would imply the undoing of logic and reason and render the common verdict of nonsense pronounced on drunken states irrelevant. All of drunkenness may not be drunk and all of religion may not be an illusion.

(To be concluded)

EDITORIAL.

VOLUME XIII.

With the present number this monthly enters upon its thirteenth year. Its mission is by no means fulfilled. As long as the sectarian spirit abides, as long as there are sects, with conflicting creeds, claims and names; as long as the method of dogmatism in truth-seeking obtains, as long as the highest moral and spiritual ideal of humanity remains an unrealized dream, so long will this monthly messenger have its place and purpose among the forces that are making for progress in the deep things of the spirit.

Just as the various denominational papers and magazines

have their respective purposes and functions, so we too have our aims and objects.

No other religious journal stands for the method of freedom, or science, applied to the unsolved problems of ethics and religion; for the ideal of religious fellowship and for a truly universal religion that calls itself by no sectarian name but pays due homage to every historical religion in proportion to the amount of truth it has to teach and the inspiration which its founders' life and character affords. These are distinctive features of our monthly and it has therefore no occasion to apologize for its existence. It will continue to interpret and advance the magnificent cause of free, spiritual and universal religion, as contrasted with the seven great extant religions which are creed-bound, traditional and sectarian. With the magnanimous co-operation of the distinguished men whose names appear on the first page we hope to make this thirteenth volume "facile princeps" of the series.

EDNAH DOW CHENEY.

As the December issue was coming from the press news reached us of the death of Mrs. E. D. Cheney, the distinguished radical thinker and practical reformer, at her home in Jamaica Plain, Boston, at the ripe old age of eighty years. The "Free Religious Association of America," the New England Hospital for Women and Children, the "Woman's Suffrage Association," the Concord School of Philosophy, these and a score of other organizations in which freedom, justice, benovelence and education were involved, found in Mrs. Cheney a loyal, generous supporter, a fearless champion, an invaluable friend. Her hymns have found their way into every recent collection. Her essays on art and literature take rank with the most illuminating and profound. Her speeches in behalf of the slaves, before and after the war; in support of woman's rights, political and professional; in defense of religious liberty, in opposition to all forms of ecclesiastical authority and sectarian rivalries and feuds; all were marked by rare breadth of vision and exceptional charm of manner and voice. She was a radical of the radicals in religion. In 1894 at the memorable meeting of the Free Religious association which since 1867 had been the vanguard of the world's religious leadership, Mrs. Cheney voted for the taking of the forward step which the majority opposed and thereby bereft the association of its hegemony among the liberal associations of the world. Our friends in Tacoma have special reason to remember Mrs. Cheney with gratitude and affection because of her frequent manifestations of genuine interest in our cause.

Not only did she write for the pages of this monthly both in poetry and prose but she also contributed at various times to the treasury of the Tacoma Free Church, each time accompanying her gift with an encouraging and inspiring word.

We reprint herewith the hymn so typical of the catholicity and deep spiritual grace of her nature.

Many in one, our fathers said,
Many in one, say we;
Of different creeds, of differing forms,
Love brings us unity.

Let Science scan the open page
Of sky and sea and land,
And tell the secrets written there
By Time's mysterious hand.

Let Art reveal the inner thought
In nature's forms of grace,
And feel God's presence everywhere,
See everywhere his face.

Let Faith attune the hidden strings
That Science cannot sound,
And Future, Past and Present bind
In one harmonious round.

From each, from all, may life outflow,
To each and all flow in:
It needs us all to swell the chords
Of life's triumphant hymn.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

We have been hearing much of late about Christian Unity. It is a noble ideal, just one remove from the higher unity which is neither Christian, nor Jewish, nor Buddhist, nor Hindu, but Human. Beyond this we cannot go. If we could conceive of a still higher fellowship than this we would adopt it at once as our ideal, stand for it and work for it.

But obviously the noblest religious fellowship conceivable is simply human, encompassed by no smaller name, not even Christian, because the ideal fellowship recognizes not merely the equal rights of all Christians but the equal rights of all *men*. Toward this ideal the world slowly moves and the signs of Christian unity represent one important stage of the process. Our only question is, are these signs as great and significant as they seem? Is there as yet any amalgamation of sects, or

even of sub-sects, such as has been talked of and dreamed of? How much does Christian Unity really mean today? We observe, for example, that the several divisions of the Methodist body are as clearly marked as ever and that the conflicting elements show no signs of readiness to obliterate differences for the sake of organic unification. Similarly the several sections of Presbyterianism have not succeeded in coming together as one harmonious working organization. As for Episcopalianism, the "Reformed" element holds aloof from the larger body as persistently as ever, though the high, low and broad parties are all living with a fair degree of peace under one roof. That such sects as the "Baptists" and "Disciples" will ever unite seems an unreasonable expectation. Even such liberal sects as the Universalists and Unitarians seem unable to take down the slight barrier that still divides them. The highest official of Unitarianism in a recent address before a representative body of Congregationalists made what many regarded as improper overtures of a union of those two bodies, because the effect of such a step would be an inevitable splitting up of both sects and making four out of two.

To be sure there are miniature parliaments of religion in which many different denominations are represented, but the fact cannot be escaped that all such assemblies depend for their peace and practical efficiency on one condition, namely, the scrupulous avoidance of sectarian differences. The Unitarian and the Episcopal clergymen may sit on the same platform to discuss and promote temperance or civic reforms and public charities, but whatever amenities they may show here will not induce the Episcopalian to set aside the claim of apostolic succession and invite the Unitarian to occupy his pulpit at a Sunday morning service or even to treat the Unitarian minister as his equal in *the* church. "Touch the sectarian sores and the sectarian nerves will instantly respond." For these there can be but one cure, the excision of the dogmas and exclusive claims that have created them.

So far, then, as the "signs of the times" are concerned, they indicate that Christian Unity is still far from what many of us imagine it to be. The most that it means today, the level to which it has thus far risen may be stated as (1) a tacit agreement on the part of all the sects to avoid trespassing on each other's rights, (2) to eschew theological controversy or attack and (3) to co-operate in all worthy enterprises which do not involve sectarian differences. And these three phases of modern Christian Unity are distinct marks of genuine human progress in which every devotee of universal religion will heartily rejoice. Once let the representatives of any given sect grasp the truth that

their sect is only a part and not the whole, and that this whole is nothing smaller than humanity itself; convince them that their particular ism is but as the limb to the tree, a part meant to live both for the whole and for itself in one harmonious organic process of evolution—and for them the decay of sectarianism will have set in.

RELIGIOUS MASQUERADING.

A highly respected Unitarian minister writes us that his society is just as free and universal as are those at Tacoma and Seattle, because to this Unitarian church are admitted "Jews, Agnostics, Free Thinkers, Spiritualists and Non-descripts." But does such generous fellowshiping of non-Unitarians make his church any less Unitarian, Christian and Protestant? Did not the denomination of which his Unitarian church is an organic part collectively declare in 1894 its Protestant, Christian position in terms so explicit that any objector had no alternative but withdrawal from the denomination? Consequently these Jews, Agnostics, etc., in the local Unitarian church present a sorry spectacle as part of a Protestant Christian sect. We have heard of Unitarians joining Episcopalian churches without any change in their original beliefs concerning Jesus or God. Does their membership make those churches any less Episcopalian? Similarly the Unitarian church of our friend is not any less such because certain members masquerade as Unitarians. Nothing can make his Unitarian church "Free and Universal" but the surrender of his sectarian connection and the vote of his people to take an unequivocal stand for uncompromised freedom and for universality as the guiding principles of their organization.

PASTOR WAGNER'S POSITION AND POWER.

Charles Wagner of Paris, world-famous since the appearance of "The Simple Life" is a non-sectarian within the Christian circle. He has thought himself out of the Lutheran denomination but into no other. He is in more or less cordial sympathy with all the Christian sects though identified with none of them. He comes as near to being a cosmopolite or Universalite, as it is possible for one to come, while still within the Christian rim. Just one more step is needed to bring him into a wholly non-sectarian position, because Christianity is only one of the seven great sects each of which subsumes smaller sects.

In our judgment there is just one position nobler and more engaging than Pastor Wagner's, namely, that which extends its

hospitality and catholicity beyond the Christian rim and for the sake of a truly cosmopolitan fellowship renounces the Christian name. Universal Religion because of its complete non-sectarian character is more comprehensive and inclusive than Christianity, Judaism, or any other of the great historical religions, even as the word human is greater and grander than Christian or Buddhist or Jew. The practice of stretching the lawful meaning of Christian till it becomes coterminous with universal (for the sake of saving the name) is one of the deplorable tendencies of our time, certain to be repudiated when the spirit of true brotherhood in religion has become more fully developed in Christian hearts. Then it will be seen that we do the ideal thing by our brethern of every land and creed when we invite them to a fellowship of free souls, using the freedom of the scientific method in the search for truth and sacrificing nothing that is true, beautiful and good in Christianity or in any of the other sectarian religions.

What is the secret of Pastor Wagner's power? "The Simple Life" has been translated into most of the languages of civilization and already over one hundred thousand copies have been sold in America alone. The book has been publicly praised by President Roosevelt, read and heartily approved by the most dissimilar types of character and its beneficent influence is still very far from spent. How shall we account for these remarkable results? Certainly not in terms of literary style, because the book is decidedly without literary power. As some one has aptly said "you hear a voice, you do not see the pen." Is then the secret to be found in the author's oratory? No, because those who have heard him are of one mind regarding his limitations as a speaker. He has none of the gifts peculiar to Beecher, Frothingham or Phillips Brooks. We must look elsewhere for the explanation of his singular power. It lies first of all, in the universality of his message, the inevitable appeal which it makes to all hearts, to people in every walk and calling. Add to this the very remarkable absence of all doctrinal and dogmatic allusions in the presentation of his gospel, an achievement unrivaled in this class of literature. Once more, the author steers clear of those extreme positions which earlier apostles of simplicity have assumed, notably Rousseau, who pleaded for a return to the innocence of the primitive savage; and Thoreau, who advocated withdrawal from the noisy street and busy mart to the "Waldenic" type of life. Wagner avoids these extremes and shows his readers how, as citizens of a great city, they may live the simple life in the very thick of the complexities that environ

them. His book is a spiritual stethoscope whereby the soul's condition may be tested as is that of the heart by the physician's instrument. If the book appeals to us, reproves us, inspires us, we are safe; if not, we are soul-sick, suffering from spiritual anemia, in need of more moral and spiritual nutriment. It is to these characteristics of Wagner's book that we point as accounting for the wonderful influence it everywhere exerts.

THE NEW THEISM IN VERSE.

The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:
"Lord, take away pain!
The shadow that darkens the world thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain
That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar,—
Lord, take away pain from the world thou hast made,
That it love thee the more!"

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world:
"Shall I take away pain,
And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives that would climb unto mine
The Christ on his cross?"

—Julia Larned.

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,—
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,—
The infinite, tender sky,—
The ripe, rich tint of the corn-fields,
And the wild geese sailing high—
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden-rod,—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our heart high yearnings
Come welling and surging in,—
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,—
A mother starved for her brood,—
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway trod,—
Some call it consecration,
And others call it God.

—William Herbert Carruth.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

TACOMA.

In spite of preparations for Christmas, which occupy most of the preceding weeks, the month has been one of fruitful activity in the Free Church. The lectures on "Practical Psychology" given by Mr. Nesbitt to the Young Woman's Alliance have been well attended. The basket sale on the 6th. was a most profitable success. The Woman's Union tea on the 7th.

was one of the most successful of the present season. Mrs. Nesbitt read a Christmas story of her own writing which was highly appreciated. The Young People's Club has been steadily growing in numbers, and the fortnightly meetings attract every member. The Sunday school membership is now 95 and there is every indication of a continued steady increase. The Christmas entertainment, with the usual tree, was a most happy occasion for the young folks, and it was characterized by none of the deadly dullness which is so often a feature of Sunday school celebrations.

The newly organized Liberal Club had a most auspicious start on the 13th, when the members met at dinner in the Tacoma Hotel. There was much enthusiasm, and several made impromptu post prandial speeches on interesting subjects. The officers elected for the year are Dr. William Snell, president; F. D. Nash, vice-president; and an executive committee composed of the following men: Leroy Pratt, F. D. Nash, Walter Loveday, and Mr. Nesbitt. Meetings are to be held once a month, and a dinner is to be given quarterly.

From all indications, the New Year bids fair to be one of great success for the First Free Church.

SEATTLE.

The Woman's Union is to be congratulated on the remarkable success of the recent Christmas sale at which very nearly $600.00 were taken in, enabling the Union, after all expenses are paid, to conduct the immediate purposes of the organization with ample funds. Those who had the sale directly in charge were, Mesdames Martin, E. McCloy, C. L. Smith, F. H. Padell, F. L. Harriman and Miss Harriet Gardner.

The second in the series of men's monthly dinners was held at the Hotel Washintgon, Wednesday, December 14, when in spite of the severe inclemency of the weather, thirty six attended, an increase of one over the preceding meeting. After an hour devoted to the menu, chairman John Arthur called the meeting to order and announced that his occupancy of the chair was due to the illness of Judge Osborne who had been elected to preside at this meeting. Very genuine sympathy for the esteemed president of the Advisory Council of the Society was felt by all and the most earnest hope for his speedy recovery.

It was voted to request the secretary to embody these sentiments in a letter to be sent to Judge Osborne at the Seattle General Hospital the following day.

Several committees appointed at the preceding meeting were then heard from, beginning with the committtee on constitution

and officers of which R. T. Reid was chairman. The report was such that less than thirty minutes were required for the adoption of the constitution, the choice of name and the election of officers. All present were invited to suggest a name for the organization and a committee of three determined the choice. Mr. F. W. Low announcing it as "The Men's Non-Sectarian Club." The following officers were elected for the season (November to May inclusive). President, E. L. Dean; Vice-President, D. T. Child; Secretary, Jay McCloy; Treasurer, Knute Nelson. These four together with W. B. Fraser, F. H. Padell and George Nicoll, constitute the board of directors of the club.

Messrs. J. Newberger, Novak and Stone were appointed a standing committee on "press notices." Judge George reported for the committee on entertainment, nominating Messrs. Smith, Nelson and Novak to arrange the program for the months of March and May, and Messrs West, McCloy and Reid for the months of February and April. Mr. Martin then entertained the club by a stereopticon talk on his visit to Florence, Italy. At the close of his hour he was urgently requested to continue and did so for another half hour when a rising vote of thanks was extended him by all present. The publication of a "Young People's Hymn Book," compiled by Mr. Martin, is the latest announcement from the "Junior Branch" of the Society. The members had a very successful social and dramatic entertainment December 30, at which much latent talent was brought to light. The Young Ladies' Alliance, which meets fortnightly with Mrs. Martin, has added nine more members to its roll. A handsome potted palm was sent by the Alliance, to Mrs. Martin Christmas morning. The trustees report a decided increase in the number of names on the treasurer's books as well as larger plate collections at the Sunday meetings. But in both departments there is room for improvement if the various activities of the Society are to be developed as they deserve to be.

NOTE.

Have you renewed your subscription for 1905? We believe that all our subscribers will wish to renew their annual expression of genuine interest in our monthly messenger. We only ask that they help lighten the arduous labors of the publication committee (gratuitously given) by sending in their subscriptions not later than the 25th of this month, either to Mr. Samuel Collyer, 213 California Building, Tacoma, or to Mr. B. Galland, 1700 Madison St., Seattle.